



# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## KYODAN CALLS FOR HALT IN VIETNAM BOMBING

The United Church of Christ (Kyodan), 198,000-member Japanese denomination affiliated with American Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church and Reformed groups, has appealed to President Johnson for an immediate halt to the bombing of North Vietnam.

Asserting that attacks on Haiphong and Hanoi oil depots have "trampled under" the desires for peace "of not only the intelligent and well-wishing people in Japan but of all Asia and of all other parts of the world", the official statement of the Japanese denomination charged President Johnson with having "destroyed by your own hand the possibility of talking peace in spite of all your official statements". The July 20th letter went on to ask that President Johnson "Unconditionally, please, bring the bombing of North Vietnam to a halt at once, and continue to use all possible means to bring about peace talks with North Vietnam and the Viet Cong."

The United Church of Christ appeal was contained in a letter to the President signed by Kyodan Moderator Isamu Omura. Dr. Omura led a delegation of Japanese churchmen who visited the United States last August as members of a "Japanese Christian Peace Team" which toured the country under an itinerary set-up by the National Council of Churches.

## MATSUMURA TO LONDON FOR BAPTIST MEET

Pastor Shuichi Matsumura, vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance, left Japan on July 25th for an executive committee meeting of The Alliance in London. At the August 1 London meeting Baptists were expected to designate Tokyo as host city for the Baptist World Congress of 1970. Japan Government officials have extended an invitation to the group.



### CHRISTIAN PARAPLEGIC TRAVELS TO WORLD OLYMPICS

AGAPE, The training and work center for handicapped persons operated by Japan Church World Service, proudly watched one of its personnel, Mr. Sukeji Wada, leave Japan for the International Stokes-Mandeville Games (Paraplegic Olympics) held at London on July 26-30. Mr. Wada, an employee in Agape's TV Wiring department, competed in Archery and Pingpong. His journey to the competition was made possible by grants from the Health And Welfare Ministry, Government of Japan, and from local Prefectural authorities.

### TWO SUMMER RETREATS FOR BLIND SPONSORED BY CHRISTIAN GROUP

Summer retreats for the blind were held at two locations in eastern and western Japan during the summer by the Japan Council on Christian Evangelism for the Blind.

The Council, which serves an estimated 3-4000 blind persons among Japan's 20,000 sightless, reserved Dogo spa in Matsuyama (western Japan) for a three-day period beginning July 25, and Kinugawa spa, Tochigi-ken (eastern Japan), for a similar interval from August 10.

The Council is active in encouraging blind people through the sponsorship of study meetings, workshops for educators among the blind, and retreats such as those of this summer. Lecturers at the meetings will be Rev. Jiro Fukui of the Kyodan's Idebukuro Nishi Church, and Mr. Shigeyoshi Suzuki of the Japan Baptist Union.

### NOTED MISSIONARY EDUCATOR DIES IN CALIFORNIA

Miss Olive Sawyer Hoyt, long-time Principal of Matsuyama Girls' High School and Junior College, and former staff member at Kobe College, died at Claremont, California, on July 19. She was 92.

Miss Hoyt, born in 1874, arrived in Japan in October of 1902 and worked for a decade at Kobe Jagakuin College. In 1931 she transferred to Matsuyama Shinonome Girls' High School and Junior College. Except for a three-year period from 1915 to 1918, when she returned to Kobe, Miss Hoyt served on the staff at the Matsuyama School until her retirement in 1951. For a period of many years from 1919 onward to the Second World War she was the principal of the Shikoku institution.

Known for her high standard of scholarship and excellent command of Japanese, Miss Hoyt was honored in November of 1950 by the Imperial Household with the Fourth Order of the Sacred Treasure. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, she held the Doctor of Literature degree from her alma mater.

Miss Hoyt was a missionary appointed by the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of the American Congregational Churches (now The United Church of Christ.)

### JAPAN CHRISTIAN YEARBOOK READY

The 1966 edition of the Japan Christian Yearbook is now available from The Christian Literature Society of Japan, 2, 4-chome, Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, at \$4.50 (postage paid) to international readers. The 522-page 55th annual Yearbook features articles on Japanese life and on The Church by Japanese and western writers. A Directory of churches, missions and missionaries is appended.



SPECIAL REPORT ON THE ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

by James A. Gittings

Christian women talked in Tokyo last week about opportunities and problems posed for their homes, churches and nations by revolutionary events in Asia. They began their discussions with reality; they began with "the private world".

The occasion was the third Asian Church Women's Conference, a July 15-26 meeting at which delegates, for the first time in the history of this East Asia Christian Conference-related organization, were able to "see" the results of initiatives begun at their first conference at Hong Kong in 1959 and continued in Thailand in 1963. Atop a piano in the "small chapel" at International Christian University, site of the conference, stood one such evidence, a tiny nativity scene carved of unbleached wood. The figures were the gift of the NCCC-affiliated Delta Ministry, a civil rights organization which (with Southern Christian Leadership) has received funds from ACWC's "Fellowship of the Least Coin" prayer-and-gift ministry. Expressive of accomplishment in a similar way was the presence among delegates of 2 representatives from churches in Nigeria and the Union of South Africa. The Africans carried thanks from Christians of their continent for Fellowship of the Least Coin gifts which have been despatched over the years to Church projects in Rhodesia, Kenya and the African expatriate community in Paris.

Basic building blocks of this conference of Asian churchwomen were the study commissions and workshops on Women in the Home, Women in the Church, Women in Society, and Women in the World. To these consultations women came prepared to discuss the "big issues". There was talk of booming populations, family planning techniques and education, the position of the Church amid communities of other faiths and juvenile delinquency; there was discussion of peace and war, the mother-who-works, problems of Christian witness and discrimination in Asia. But in their approach to these matters the women displayed an attitude best described by a quotation brought to the Conference by Mrs. Rayann Ma, chairman of the workshop on Women in the World. That is, the delegates began their consideration of each topic with an account of that "private world" of which Dag Hammarskjold spoke at the New Year of 1963, the world of individual homes, towns, churches and nations in which each of the women strove to work out a witness.

Such modest points-of-beginning lent the conference a flavor of intimacy and tender practicality moving to hear and to observe. Addresses on basic beliefs by theologian Hans Margull, and morning devotions conducted by Indonesia's minister-housewife Margareth Lie, reinforced the apparent will of the women to look at their calling with an extremely personal eye.

Margull began his lecture series with an address descriptive of a God Who Acts, a God for whom, Margull made it apparent, the entire cosmos is a "private world". He concluded his address with an account of an act of that God in the world of a cancer patient, the late Mary Lou Petrello whose moving story of her illness and triumph of faith recently appeared in PRESBYTERIAN LIFE. Margull's quotation from Mrs. Petrello--"I must confess that I love this beautiful world...and I hope the Lord has more work for me to do here"--seemed to strike the notes of affection for their neighbors and will to witness which actuated the delegates.

Margareth Lie, in her refreshing spade-is-a-spade manner, told the delegates that a private world need not be a contemptible world unless one makes it so. "For such a time as this" you are chosen, she asserted, proceeding to sketch from the Old Testament the personalities of other persons chosen for other times. She spoke of Abraham, a leader who knew when to act. But it was Esther, the individual of more ordinary origins and attainment, who seemed to belong more positively to the spirit of this conference.



The churchwomen's preoccupation with ordinary Christians carried over to Conference social activities also, and in particular to the colorful 'cultural' evenings at which, turn by turn, the women of various Asian regions portrayed their daily life. "This is how we wash a baby in a Pakistani village", one demonstrated with a doll. "The butterfly sleeve is the distinctive dress of Filipino women", observed a matron from Panay. A woman from Colombo froze the room with a Ceylonese lovesong.

From these "ordinary" exchanges grew a feeling of ease with one another. That relaxed atmosphere brought a freedom to criticize which soon led delegates to shake their heads in puzzlement at a note sounding in the Bible Studies led by Japanese pastor Masaichi Takemori. The trouble seemed to be that Mr. Takemori, in his desire that the Church, by renewing herself, become the "Beautiful Society", took a position which some considered ecclesiocentric. A Korean delegate objected, asserting "The Church exists for the world". Pakistan's gentle Esther Jawahar Masih wondered whether or not the Japanese Church held a vision for a Japan which would be a "Christian" Japan.

On the other hand, Mrs. Michiko Okuda- a Japanese housewife- illustrates the kind of evangelistic commitment in the home which, common in Japan, flourishes less vigorously around the jealously guarded domestic hearths of Pakistan or India. "One thing we must always do is share the abundance of our Christian life", she told her fellow delegates. "I try to keep in mind that I must not think only of my family; that I must permit my family to share in mission. For example, we have a garden... Gardens are precious in Japan. But I encourage my children to bring their playmates there, since little space for play exists anywhere else. Or...we take a cottage at the lake in summer. We set aside half the cottage-two rooms-for a non-Christian family to share our vacation with us. Self-centeredness is the common enemy, you see."

To conference delegates this reporter posed his usual challenge, asking how the expense of travel and lodging (more than \$37000 in this instance) could be justified in terms of results. The replies were given confidently and not-as at other meetings-with heat.

Mrs. Shuichi Matsumura, wife of the vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance noted that "the value is fellowship...getting to know each other. We obtain information here, and learn what is going on in individual situations. I think the Question Hour may have been the most valuable period of the conference--a chance to learn what has happened in Indonesia, for example, and in South Africa."

Margareth Lie, "outside" for the first time since last autumn's Indonesian bloodbath, expanded on the view: "Such a conference", she said, "enables us to tell each other 'This is how it was and not otherwise' concerning events in our nations. It also helps to speed the processes of reconciliation- You would be surprised how long a hatred can last if you don't know the people of another nation, and how quickly it passes if you do. In addition, there is comfort at such meetings as this, the sharing of sorrows."

For Mrs. Matsumura and Mrs. Lie, attendance at international conferences is not unusual. But the replies of two women attending their first Asian Church Women's Conference meeting indicates that for newcomers the impact of such assemblies is profound. "I'm going home a different person", observed Mary Sarongan of Djakarta. Said Mrs. Consorcia Pabiona, of Iloilo City, The Philippines, "The Conference meant O So Much to me...It was my first, you see, and it leaves me inspired."



Despite these observations, it is probable that the Asian Church Women's Conference for 1966 will not in the future evoke memories of exciting discovery such as are recalled concerning the 1959 Hong Kong meeting, or recollections of a dramatic "launch into the deep" which characterize remembrances of Thailand in 1963. The Tokyo conference was a family gathering, a livingroom conclave of people who have learned to know and love each other.

In this connection it is worth noting that an absence at the conference of "resolutions", "messages" and "open letters" touching on current problems at first dismayed this observer. When the women turned to their preoccupation with the Fellowship of the Least Coin, however, it became apparent that this Fellowship--conceived as a program in which the coin of smallest value evidenced sustained prayer for Christian concerns by millions of women, had grown to a size and significance which made of it the acting arm of compassion, and an effectual voice of protest, for Asian Christian women. Thus the gift to Southern Christian Leadership and The Delta Ministry had been ACWC's voice of protest on American racial discrimination; the gift to an obscure Saigon congregation had underscored the women's passion for peace in that country. For the rest, the delegates spoke from a "private world" in which, as Christians, they found opportunity to express their will in collective action more frequently than controversy.

Sayonara from Tokyo!

